

~~Working Draft for the Board~~  
26 June 1953  
29

SUBJECT: PROBABLE SOVIET REACTIONS TO DEVELOPMENTS IN EASTERN  
GERMANY (Draft for Board Consideration)

THE PROBLEM - "

To estimate probable short-term Soviet reactions, to (principally in Germany)

developments taking place in East Germany since early June 1953.

To assess the implications of such reactions to the US.

ESTIMATE

1. On 10 June the Soviet occupation authority of East

Germany, through the German Democratic Republic, announced a series of measures which in effect reversed the program of heavy industrialization adopted by the SED in July 1952 and represented the essence of a NEP policy, of reforms which significantly modified and in some cases actually

~~reversed, existing Communist policies.~~ These reforms were probably

announced in recognition of popular dissatisfaction (obviously under

~~satellization.~~ In addition they satellization. with the accelerated pace of ~~Sovietization~~ and also, probably represented a major move in ~~the~~ Communist political warfare, although perhaps somewhat less important, as part of the Communist ~~against West German rearmament and West German integration with the rest of Western Europe.~~ To a lesser extent these concessions probably represented an effort to influence September elections in West Germany. In the

~~normal course of events the announcement of the reforms probably~~

~~would have been followed by additional concessions over demand~~

DOCUMENT NO.

NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐

☒ DECLASSIFIED

CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS 0038-9

NEXT REVIEW DATE:

AUTH: HR 70-2

DATE: 5 FEB 81 REVIEWER: 018557

~~to appeal to West German voters. Such gestures were~~

~~included the removal of Soviet troops from Germany.~~

~~2. The Soviet leadership anticipated serious political strikes~~

~~and riots spreading across the GDR. The Soviet leadership spread~~

~~to Soviet troops in the GDR. Until the very outbreak of~~

~~the~~ <sup>which soon followed,</sup> disorders the GDR and the Kremlin obviously had seriously underrated

the extent of popular discontent in East Germany. ~~Confronted with~~

<sup>For this reason</sup> suspected widespread disaffection, the Soviet authorities probably

decided against testing the reliability of German security forces and

depended almost exclusively on the use of Soviet units despite inevitable

unfavorable propaganda implications of such a course.

~~noIP~~ ~~the situation in East Germany is becoming~~

~~confused.~~ <sup>Thus,</sup> the Communists <sup>now face</sup>

~~confronted, the Soviet leadership with a situation very different than that which~~

they had led themselves to believe had existed. ~~In estimating the~~

~~probable Soviet reaction to this new situation there are two key~~  
~~Although the situation in East Germany is still fluid, we do not believe~~  
~~that recent developments have changed the twin Soviet objectives of: (a)~~  
~~Soviet objectives must be kept in mind. Firstly, the USSR will continue~~

<sup>(seeking)</sup> ~~by political warfare to prevent or at least to retard the~~

~~West German rearmament and the integration of West Germany~~  
with the West. (b) Maintaining effective control over  
~~Secondly, regardless of what happens the USSR intends~~  
to cope with the situation in East Germany. ~~it will not undertake any~~  
~~action which will weaken its control over that area.~~

*mind 177*  
1. The Communists have already officially announced that they  
will not only proceed with the 10-11 June reform proposals, but that  
they will broaden the scope of these measures. The Communists probably  
will actually implement such of these proposed concessions as will  
not be inconsistent with security requirements. However, over and  
above these bread-and-circus provisions for the people of the Eastern  
zone, the Soviet Union will almost certainly take some fundamental  
actions to assure the achievement of basic Soviet objectives towards

*RP3* Soviet reaction to developments in East Germany  
Germany. It could conceivably run the gamut from a ~~Soviet~~  
of overt Soviet forces to a return to the  
withdrawal from East Germany ~~to a~~ rapid and severe satellization of

this area. We believe that each of these extreme courses of action  
is unlikely.

*Sub P!*  
2.  
(of overt Soviet forces)  
A Soviet withdrawal from East Germany would provide the USSR  
with excellent propaganda opportunities and would probably induce

many Western European countries to depreciate the Soviet threat with a consequent weakening of NATO. On the other hand, recent developments must have demonstrated to the Kremlin the weakness of the local

Communist regime and must have raised serious doubts as to the reliability of East German security elements.

*The Kremlin must almost certainly recognize that the withdrawal of ~~the Soviet~~ Soviet forces from East Germany at this time would seriously compromise Soviet control over this area. Therefore,*

of the long run advantages to the USSR that might accrue from a Soviet withdrawal, East Germany's importance to the USSR is too direct and too immediate for it to risk losing effective control over this area.

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

*Sub P* *b.* *return to the* A harsh policy, such as a rapid satellization of East Germany,

might appeal to the Kremlin as a means of quickly and effectively

reasserting its authority over its zone and of crushing dissidence

once and for all. Moreover, such a move would serve to warn the

people of the Eastern European satellites that the Communist hierarchy

~~will~~ brook no disaffection. On the other hand, so repressive a policy is entirely inconsistent with the conciliatory line now affected by the Kremlin throughout the world. Moreover, it would probably increase West European determination to build up NATO and ~~possibly~~ <sup>might</sup> even expedite the formation of EDC. It would almost certainly

adversely influence, from the Communist point of view, the September

this policy is entirely inconsistent with the officially announced reforms  
elections in West Germany. Finally, in the present climate of East

Germany, <sup>this</sup> ~~such~~ <sup>probably</sup> policy could be implemented only at gunpoint and at

great economic and political sacrifices.  
~~high cost in manpower and resources.~~

4. We believe that the most probable Soviet reaction will fall between these two extremes and will incorporate some elements of each. We believe that the USSR will not risk effective control of

East Germany by failure to keep a substantial Soviet force in this

area or by failure to use this or any other instrument which may be

necessary to crush ~~the~~ current or future disturbances. <sup>losing</sup> ~~the following~~  
<sup>We further believe, however, that</sup>

~~this policy~~, the USSR will probably attempt to create a

facade of order and consent in East Germany, <sup>and will rely</sup> ~~on~~ on overt force

only when all other measures fail. <sup>As indicated in Para 3 b above,</sup> ~~Some steps have already been~~

*the Communists have indicated that they will follow through and indeed expand on the 10-11 June reforms. They will probably also*

*attempt to create the*  
appearance of a broader based ~~to the~~ East German government, ~~possibly~~  
*(possibly)*  
~~by~~ by restricting the role of the SED and by giving

greater apparent influence to other political parties, ~~in the Eastern~~

~~and.~~

*In terms of over-all Soviet Policy, we believe that,*  
5. After an interval to permit a rehabilitated East German

government to establish at least apparent stability, the USSR will  
*diplomatic and propaganda efforts to woo the West Germany*  
probably resume its ~~intense propaganda against West Germany's pro-~~  
*2 way from reunification and integration with Western Europe.*  
~~US Christian Democrats in order to defeat this party in the September~~

*The Communists'*  
~~through its~~ ability to exert significant influence in the  
*forthcoming West German*  
~~these elections is now (and will probably continue to be)~~ considerably

*but*  
less than it was prior to 16 June, <sup>^</sup> there are still some propaganda  
*could*  
gambits the USSR ~~can~~ employ which ~~could~~ not only <sup>to</sup> serve immediate  
Soviet purposes in Germany, but possibly <sup>to</sup> advance Soviet aims in

*On the diplomatic level,*  
Europe as a whole. ~~and~~, the USSR may ~~show a willingness~~

*Call for an early Four Party Conference*  
to discuss the withdrawal of foreign forces from Germany and even the  
*All-German* *Such a*  
holding of free elections. ~~A Soviet suggestion to hold an early con-~~

~~ference or a similar arrangement~~ would not obligate the Soviet



SECRET

Union to reach ~~any~~ agreement with the Western Powers on the issues <sup>(any of)</sup> implicit in the unification of Germany. We continue to believe ~~of troop withdrawal and free elections. At the same time, however, the~~ that any Soviet-initiated suggestions for troop withdrawals or free ~~West Germans would be treated to the tantalizing prospect of unification~~ elections would contain conditions which the Kremlin would intend ~~if they were to elect a government with which the Communists could~~ to be unacceptable to the West, or that the Kremlin would intend ~~to prevent the implementation of agreements embodying these proposals.~~ \*

<sup>6</sup> If the West proposed a Four Power Conference on Germany

~~unification~~ to be held this summer, the Communists would lose some

propaganda advantages from not having taken the initiative on this

(Depending on the extent of advance commitments (e.g. the agenda) and matter. ~~They~~ would probably accept such a proposal and even indicate

their willingness to discuss the withdrawal of foreign troops and

possibly free elections. <sup>(They might)</sup> In this case, ~~if a too, we~~ believe that

~~gave them sufficient time to repair war political damage in East~~

Germany, and ~~provided the conference negotiations could be motivated~~

to introduce the necessary free elections.

regardless of whether the initiative for unification proposals came

~~from the West or the East and regardless of the Soviet Union's willingness~~

to discuss the various issues implicit in unification, ~~it is almost~~

~~certainly~~ the Soviet Union would be unwilling <sup>(almost certainly)</sup> to actually implement

the withdrawal of its forces or free All-German elections.

depending on whether they felt the timing of the conf. was as the prior negotiations for the conference provided them with an opportunity to influence the September elections, the Communists

SECRET